

SOME SHORT
REMARKS

Upon a BOOK, Entitled,
AN ANSWER
(But is none)

To Dr. STILLINGFLEET's *Sermon*,
BY SOME
NONCONFORMISTS.

In a Letter to his Friend in *London*
From a Person of Quality in the Country.

He that entreth not by the Door, but climbeth up some other way,
is a Thief and a Robber. John 10. 1.

Let every thing be done decently and in order. 1 Cor. 14. 40.

L O N D O N,
Printed for Randal Taylor, 1680.

SOME SHORT

REMARKS

UPON A BOOK ENTITLED

THE ART OF DEFENCE

(BUT IS NONE)

TO DR. GUNNINGHAM'S

BY SOME

NONCONFORMISTS.

IN A LETTER TO HIS FRIEND IN LONDON

FROM A PERSON OF QUALITY IN THE COUNTRY.

Printed at the Office of the Editor, No. 10, St. Paul's Church-yard, London.

For every thing of the kind, apply to the Editor, No. 10, St. Paul's Church-yard, London.

LONDON

Printed for R. B. Johnson, 1880.

Some short Remarks upon a Book entituled, *An Answer*
(but is none) to Dr. Stillingfleet's Sermon.



Received your Letter, incloſing a little Book, entituled, *An Answer to Dr. Stillingfleet's Sermon by ſome Nonconformiſts*. And becauſe you deſired me, I have read it over, and that with great expectation to have found ſome things conſiderable in it, which might have answered the great promiſes of the Title Page, viz. *The Imputation of Schiſm removed. Nonconformity juſtified. And Materials to heal both Parties offered*. But really, Sir, upon peruſal of the whole matter (though I have as much inclination as any man to allow the utmoſt weight to Arguments, brought in favour of tender Conſciences, properly ſo called) I muſt ſay, that I am where I was, and find little or nothing but what hath been often ſaid, and as often answered.

The Subſcription, on the Title Page (*Are they Miniſters of Chriſt? ſo are we*) is a pitiful begging of the Queſtion; and if they could prove that, or we allow it, much of the Quarrel would fall to the Ground: but as they have never been, nor probably will ever be, able to prove that, moſt of what they ſay is not material.

It would be an extravagant preſumption in me, though no uneaſy task, to undertake to prove and juſtify not the Lawfulneſs, and Authority, but the neceſſity of Episcopacy, which hath been the work of ſo many learned Divines, and

others of our Church, enough to convince any thing but prepared and covenanted Obstinacy.

I shall therefore give you some private Remarks, of what I observed in running over the Ramble.

The Stile, at first, is so seemingly humble and creeping, that without question it will prevail with some Women, to conclude, That it proceeded from the Spirit of Meekness, and consequently of Truth. But to any ordinary Observer there will appear so much Venome, so many biting Snakes in the Grass, that we may rather fear, it is the issue of that old Serpent, that Roves about seeking whom he can insnare and devour.

For after a Profession made of what Veneration they have for *Parochial Churches, and the Service there*, yet the *Communion* is the more *Spiritual, plain, and simply zealous Service of Almighty God*, which they cannot leave for a *Form of Worship and Discipline*; that carrying a countenance of both, but being rather only a kind of Idols of them, doth seem to them by the *Shew, Pomp and Complement of the things it contains not, to undermine the Life, Power and Efficacy of the one and the other.* (fol. 9.) Which is so modest a Character of our publick Liturgy, compil'd by so many learned Divines, and Martyrs, that justified it with their Blood, that could not proceed but from the meek Spirit of the Presbyterian.

(*Fol. 4.*) That insolent Argument of comparing themselves to the Apostles, and that *they must obey God rather than Man*, hath been lately answered by the Author of *Curses & Mercies*. (a Person, had he dressed his Truths in a more decent Habit, and not play'd so much the Man in some Scholastick Points, he might have passed for a very good Assertor of Truth and Loyalty.)

That Slip, as they term it, of Dr. Tillotson's Pen, is a readier way to heal all Parties, than all the Expedients ever offered by those Disturbers of our *Israel*, whom, I fear, nothing

thing but another Slip can cure. For what would not the more moderate and enquiring sort of *Roman Catholics* give in *Spain* and *Italy* for such a Liberty? or what in reason could we ask more, if we should be reduced under such circumstances?

Fol. 5. That malicious Dilemma, *If we keep our Parish Churches, we must not preach the Gospel; if we preach the Gospel, we must go to private Meetings*, is another modest insinuation, That the Gospel is not preached in Parish Churches, but is in Conventicles. Whereas the Gospel is the Gospel of Peace, but the very keeping of Conventicles is a declared War against all Law, Loyalty, and Allegiance; and the Text says, *Obedience is better than Sacrifice*.

And to talk of *occasional Calls*, and *Talents*, and that the *overlasting welfare of thousands of Mens Souls depends upon them*, is but to Cant, and raise a Dust, thereby to cheat their gazing and gapeing Auditors.

Fol. 6. 'Tis a new and untrodden way of justifying their Auditors Schism, by owning themselves Schismatics, because preaching and hearing are *Relata*, which do mutually destroy one another. They forget the Story of *Venerable Bede*, who preached to more innocent Auditors; And certainly the putting of such *Relatives* (if not timely prevented by the Prudence of our Governours) will prove the destruction of the Government and Nation.

For what else means that bold accusing of the Piety and Wisdom of the whole Nation assembled in Parliament, in their Acts for Uniformity, of *Sin and Iniquity*, I shall recite it in their own Language.

There is yet some universal Impression on the Hearts of most honest People; which makes them tenderly sensible of the wrong we have suffered, in being turn'd out of the Vineyard for our Consciences: And what if any do think themselves bound hereupon in the sight of God, for the delivering their own Souls from the
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Participation of their Sins, that have assisted us, to come sometimes to hear us, by the way of acknowledging our Ministry, and to give Respect to those they think worthy, that by this Countenance of theirs towards us, they may both bear their Testimony against the Iniquity, and offer so much aid in their Sphere towards our Restoration; who can say but they have Reason? Who! The Law says so; The King hath said so; The two Houses of Parliament have said so; and all the loyal and orthodox Subjects of the Nation say so: And none but a factious, petulant, never-to-be-satisfied Crew of People dare say the contrary. I shall only name one modest Expression of theirs more in this Paragraph of David's Words to his Surly elder Brethren.

Fol. 7. The next Paragraph is a Challenge to one or both of those learned, moderate, and judicious Doctors (as they please to call them, when they are in a good humour) Dr. Stillingfleet, and Dr. Tillotson, who in question, when they have nothing else to do, can easily answer a great deal more than they can say on that Subject, notwithstanding what one of them hath let us know, (as they will have it out of Hales in his Defence of the Church of England against the Romanists) *It is not the Refuser, but the Imposer is guilty of Schism*; which is so ridiculously apply'd to their falling off from the Church of England, that I am ashamed to trouble you with taking notice of it. Something *injoyn'd, they say, or think, is Sin*. Therefore, &c.

To the Paragraph of Reordination, if the Act requires it (as I cannot assure my self, having it not by me): I am sorry it does, for that seems to grant them to be already ordain'd, which to me appears to be a giving them the Question, For I always believ'd that there was no other than *Episcopal Ordination in the Church of England* at least. And as to the Objection of the French Protestants and

and others abroad, I always found our Writers either leaving the Question to be decided by themselves, or else making Excuses for them, in the Condition they are in, under Popish Governours, where Episcopal Ordination will not be permitted them, &c.

But alas! what's this to our People at home, where they not only may, but must by Law, obtain Episcopal Ordination? As for their Pretences of *being made Christ's Ministers, and put in Office by him*, They would do well to prove it; this is meer begging again.

And that modest Querry, *Whether the Lawn be, de essential to the Ceremony, and the Hands avail nothing without the Sleeves on?* is so maliciously spoken in the Spirit of Meekness, that one may know by their Talons what Birds they are. They do so much hate the Bishops (Name and Thing,) that they would strip them out of those sacred Ornaments, the Piety and Prudence of our Ancestors have thought fit to invest them with, and use them as they did the late Reverend Bishop of St. Andrews in Scotland. And this they call *an humble State alone of their Defence*, fol. 1. *And they speake it humbly only by way of Argumentation*, fol. 24.

The Objections they make for their not declaring their Assent and Consent to the Common-Prayer Book are so mean and frivolous, that I much wonder, sober and serious Men (as no Question some of them are) should think them sufficient to cause such a Separation (that we do not call it Schism) amongst us, and such an one as hath banish'd all Ingenuity, Charity, and good Manners out of their Parry, so that they cannot give the *Conformists* a good Word, nor have a common Respect for them. But, poor Men, after almost 20 years poring and sifting the innocent Common-Prayer Book, they must say something, which being spoke aloud, with a Bounce

Bounce on the Pulpit, satisfies their deluded Hearers, as if they were as material, as those we urge against the Church of Rome.

But such as they are, take them.

The first is an Indictment against Poor *Athanasius*, who after so many Banishments from his Church of *Alexandria*, being long since at rest in his Grave, is to be raised again by an *habeas Corpus*, and then exported from *England* too, for a whole Jury of them have found him guilty of scandalous Words, in saying, *Which Faith except every one does keep whole, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly*; Now say they; *If we declare this, we must believe the Greek Church undoubtedly damned* ('tis their own Words) *for they did not believe the Procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son: which Athanasius requires of necessity to be believed.* Besides what would become of Poor *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, and *Luthers beloved Cicero*? I pray God they have so much Charity for the Heathens (for as such they esteem us) of the Church of *England*. And for this Reason they cannot assent and consent. I shall make no remark upon this, but help them with another Argument of the like Nature: 'Tis in the Beginning of the Publick Office for Baptism, where the Priest says, *Dearly Beloved, forasmuch as all Men are conceived and born in Sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the Kingdom of God, except he be regenerate, and born with water and the Holy Ghost.* Now if it be all one to *perish everlastingly*, and *not to enter into the Kingdom of God*, I wonder who they'll indict in this case, either he that said it, or they that put it into the Common-Prayer Book, on purpose for them to boggle at, and so thousands of People be depriv'd of their powerful Ministry.

Another Instance (say they) shall be this. *In the Service on the Gunpowder-Treason, we thank God for preserving the*

the King and the three Estates of the Realm assembled: It is a difficult Point (continue they) now in the Politicks of England, Whether the three Estates be the King, the House of Lords, and the House of Commons? Or the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and the Commons? So that till this be decided, that we may certainly know who are the three Estates, we cannot assist, &c. for we are afraid, that any snare should be laid for the People in the exercise of their Devotions to God. This is a Politick Objection indeed, and such an one as is worthy the Objectors: for certainly there is none but they themselves that make it, and having made it, raise an Argument from it for another thing, both proceeding from the inveterate Malice they have against the Reverend Order of Bishops, whom the Laws of England have so much Veneration for, as to own them one of the three Estates in our Parliaments. And one would think, that what the Laws and our Parliaments have enacted in such cases, should be Authority enough for us to observe and practise.

But first for them and their Party to raise an Objection, and then to make it a Case of Conscience, and such a Case of Conscience, as to cause and justify a Separation from an established Government in Church and State, is such a piece of Modesty and Ingenuity that none but *Presbyterians* can be guilty of. 'Twere better for them to speak the naked Truth, and say, We have taken the Covenant to pull them down, and would you have us one them to be one of the three owne Estates? That would be to make us Rebels to the Government, as well as Reformers of the Church. Alas! Alas! They cannot allow them either in Church or State. He tells us, farther for a convincing Argument of this Doctrine, by way of Question, *When they were in the beginning of the Long Parliament (pray observe the exulting Expression) turn'd out of the House by an Act, was there any, we know, that durst account the three Estates to be dissolved?* Truly; that was a time that

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the *Presbyterians* began to be so rampant, that no one durst to complain of any thing was done then, 'twas very civilly done of the Parliament to let them scape so. Others did not fare so well. And when the House of Commons turn'd out the Lords (which was a necessary consequence to the former breach made upon their House) was there any that durst say the three Estates were dissolved? And when they murdered the King, was there any that durst say the three Estates were dissolved? so that, by this way of arguing, neither King, as they say, nor Lords, as we say, were one of the three Estates. But we know well enough that 'twas then this invidious dispute of the three Estates took its rise, even from the meek Spirit of 41; When they endeavoured to degrade the King into one of the three Estates, in order to advance the House of Commons to be the King's Fellows, and Coparteners in the Government with him. A Doctrine so luscious, that it makes many of our Mouths water after it to this day; and yet in it self so unreasonable, that I cannot but wonder how it can be so confidently reassumed? The King calls a Parliament, there is, the *Caller*, and the *Called*; The Parliament are the three Estates of the Realm called together, to advise with the King, the *Caller*, *De arduis Regni negotiis*. Now to make him one of the three Estates, is to make the *Caller*, the *Called*; the *Advised* the *Adviser*, and so confound all things, That we shall have a Monarchy of three Heads, a King and no King: Subjects that are, or would be Kings: and Kings, but Royal Slaves: I can tell them, that *from the beginning it was not so*. Once upon a time, there was in Parliaments, the *Petitioners* and the *Advisers*, and then the King was the only *Enactor* (and though I would not in the least derogate from the Grandeur of that august Senate) yet the King is *aliquid Eminens & Transcendens*, above all, and virtually in all, but confined in none. Like the *Logicians*, *Ens*, *quod per omnia Pradicamenta pervagatur*, yet is limited to none of them.

them. And though, *fol. 18.* They would insinuate, *That our Laws are, quas Vulgus elegerit*, we deny it, and affirm that the Laws of a Monarchy, as ours is, are not *Plebiscita*, no nor *Senatus-Consulta* neither, but Imperial Decrees; 'Tis not, *An Populus vult*, but *Le Roy le veut*, that gives the Stamp and Character to our Laws. Though the two Houses may frame and advise the matter, as Coyners do Silver and Gold, yet it is the Impression and Stamp of the King that makes it current Money, and that gives the Form to our Laws. The King, as he is the Fountain of Honour, so he is of Law and Justice. And though the Words, *by the Advice and Consent*, are used in our late Acts, let us gratefully acknowledge what the Bounty and Indulgence of our Kings hath granted us, without drawing Consequences to the Confusion of that Order and Subordination, that hath upheld this Kingdom in Splendor and Greatness for so many Ages.

But to return, though we could not determine this ticklish Question (that ought not to have been raised) to conclude therefore, That *no Man can give his unfeigned Assent to any thing he certainly knows not, nor understands not*, is such a Latitude, that I fear the Doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation, Passion of our Saviour, his Descent into Hell, Ascent into Heaven, and many other things, that are believ'd by all, or most, yet scarce well known and understood by any, must not be assented to, but there will be a necessity to turn out the Apostles Creed too out of the Church, in order to let the Presbyterians in.

Fol. 12. They dare not consent to that hard Word, *Hierarchy; with the Ceremonies, &c.* And they bring Scripture to justify them in it, *If* (say they in Scripture words) *we build again what we have destroyed, we make our selves Transgressors?* What is this but to glory in all the Mischiefs they have brought upon this Nation these last 40 years,

and to make that an Argument for a necessity to persist in the same Opinion? And if they had opportunity to act over again all those Villanies they once, to the shame of Christianity, that I say not of Humanity it self, so woefully perpetrated. That is, they did, as much as in them lay, destroy the best of Churches, actually murdered, the best of Kings, and shall they now build again the things they so lately destroyed? God forbid they should be such Transgressors.

In this next Paragraph they tell all, saying, *There hath passed a solemn Oath over the Nation, engaging the main Body of it to endeavour a Reformation. Now when the same Government is return'd upon the Land, with all its former Corruptions, and more heavy Injunctions, if we should generally submit again to it, without obtaining any Amendment, Composition, or Abatement, we dread to think on it, with what Faces they shall be able to stand before God, who have lift up their Hands to him for things quite contrary, in the late Revolutions.* And may not we rather wonder, that there can be Men, that pretend themselves to be the most Godly, Zealous, Gharitable, Meek, and Humble of all Men, should have faces to stand before God or Man, while they make it a piece of Religion to justify the most horrid Rebellion in the World, under the gentle Term of *Revolutions?* and own the Obligation of an illegal Oath, illegally imposed, by Rebels with Swords in their Hands, upon their fellow Subjects, not as these Men foolishly think out of a Design of Reformation, either in Church or State, but to swallow up the Estates of the more consciencious Refusers? as the success, *proh dolor!* made it evident. But this is a Subject that hath been so fully treated of by several worthy Persons, convincing all Persons, not willfully blind, *That there lie b no Obligation upon any Man to endeavour to perform an illegal Oath, illegally imposed on the Nation* *wishing*

without the Kings Authority &c. but rather the contrary: that I shall only make use of their own Words in another case, fol. 30. This may seem hard (say they) to many in this Parliament to undo any thing themselves have done in a former. But this is no Rule for Christians, who are sometimes to repent, as well as to believe. I shall only intreat them to apply it to themselves, and if they are Christians, let them repent; if they are not, let them not pretend to it.

The Instances they produce out of the Common-Prayer Book, as I told you, are so frivolous, that I will but name them. viz. *Ahaziah's age (though not there.) They were not obedient to his Word. Easter Almanack; saying daily the Prayer of the Church, Episcopal Ordination; God-fathers; The Charity to say of the Deceased, that God of his Mercy hath taken his Soul unto himself. Holy days, because six Days thou shalt labour; what will become of Lectures, Fasts, and thanksgiving Dinners? And lastly, beloved, The use of the Cross in Baptism. All which notwithstanding in that very Paragraph, fol. 17. They say, that in Circumstances of Worship, wherein the Church hath proper Authority to appoint what is decent and orderly. And notwithstanding the Rubrick directs to the Canon, where the Signification of the use of the Sign of the Cross is fully explained, it will not down.*

To the Subscription and Oath, they do but repeat the same things, *They think Episcopacy against Scripture, therefore how can they be abridged to endeavour the Alteration, to which they are obliged by Oath, and the Word of God? fol. 19. And what an anointed Plot, (say they,) have we here had in the Nation, that an Allegiance in effect should be sworn to the Bishops as well as to the King, by such Impositions? What an anointed Pack of Knaves are these, that will deny their Allegiance to their King, because at the same time they are bound to a Canonical Obedience to their Bishop?*

That old saying, *No Bishop, no King*, hath been so lately verified, that we hope it will never be left to them again to repeat. I know not whether they are free to take the Oath of Allegiance, but as for the Supremacy, *Fol. 30. 'tis only in an accidental external respect, and so he is to be acknowledged Supream Head, and no otherwise.* And in *Fol. 31. We hold him the Supream coercive Governour of all, in this accidental regard, &c.* To say the Truth, they make him as little as they can both in his Government of Church and State, and if they had the Reins in their own Hands, they would make him less.

The next Paragraph is a laboured Piece to find a way to take up Arms against the King by Law. And the strength of the Argument lies in this, *The King is subject to the Law;* (but we are not) *He is sworn to maintain it;* (but we will neither swear nor maintain it.)

But that rugged phrase, *I abhor that traiterous Position*, quite choaks 'em. *Grave Calamy himself was much offended at it.* And indeed it is against the nature of those People to abhor Treason. Nay they have a secret Antipathy, to call Treason Traiterous. *Some cooler word would have served the turn.* *Abhor!* God defend us, 'tis like reading the Story of Bel and the Dragon on St. Clements Day. *Fol. 16.* And yet *Fol. 11.* *They abhor to declare their Assent to the bare use of the Common Prayer;* or to have the wise and ingenuous of their particular persuasion think they believe it. And indeed I am apt to believe, This is the Hinge of the whole Controversy, upon which Nonconformity hangs. That is, seeing they have talked so big in their Meetings against Conformity, they are ashamed to go back from what they have said; for what would their deluded People say. This makes them *abhor, and abhor, and abhor.*

But the ingenuous Distinction of *abhor and disallow*, instantiated in, *that there is never a Gentleman in the Land, but might swear*

swear that he believes it unlawful to company with another Woman as his own Wife. But if each one were to swear that he abhors it, we suppose, some Sons of the Church would be willing to be Nonconformists to such an Oath. Nonconformists, why? Probably with them there is a liberty to lead about a Sister (and that makes them so numerous) without Sin or Scandal. God's Lambs, you know, must play. And so it be the Godly with the Godly, there is no unlawfulness or matter of abhorrence in it. Though Lawn will choak them, Holland will go down, and up too. But why some Sons of the Church (another meek expression) though we are no way asham'd of it. If they are not Sons, I know what they are, *Illud quod dicere nolo*.

Fol. 22. This whole Paragraph is a Lecture of stating the critical Minute, when Kings are to be Deposed, and are no longer Kings. And therefore the Compilers of the Subscription and Oath, were much to blame to oblige men to swear, on no pretence whatsoever. And then to swear positively, *It is not lawful to take up Arms, &c.* when it is a proposition questioned, and is but a controverted Doctrine. For whereas he quotes only Barclay, Grotius, and Arniseus, he might have named Calvin, Case, and Calamy, and the whole Pack of Nonconformists, who though they differ in other matters, they all agree in this, That Kings are to be resisted if they hinder the Government of Jesus Christ, which is every one of their different persuasions.

The remaining part is a Plot upon the Parliament to make them (that is those of this present Parliament, that were concerned in passing the Acts for Uniformity) to be asham'd of what they have done, &c. And, when they have seen their error, to consent to an explanatory Act (which they have ready cut and dry'd) that quite contradicts the former; which I shall leave them to consider. Only I shall observe, that as they began in an bumble, meek, modest, manner of Language

(as they call it) so they end: for, speaking of the *Pluralist*,
Fol. 33. *They term them an Idle, scandalous, covetously-over-
grown, unprofitable Ministry, &c.*

Thus, Sir, begging your pardon for troubling you with
these rude Notions, you commanded from me,

I remain,

Your most obedient Servant.

FINIS.
